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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents a brief overview of the components of a center-based Head Start child development program, including its general philosophy as well as guidelines for specific daily planning. Headings are: (1) What is a Child Development Program? (2) The Staff Designs Its Own Program; (3) The Children Themselves--What Are They Like? (4) Goals for All Children; (5) Organization of Space: How Does a Head Start Center Look? (6) Curriculum; (7) Scheduling is Knowing What Happens Next; (8) The Teacher-Child Relationship Is the Core; (9) Professional Development of Staff; (10) Volunteers; (11) Educational Allies: Parent, Child and Teacher; and (12) A Good Start. (MS)

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Daily Program I

For a Child Development Center: An Overview

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and Marjorie Graham Janis
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I. WHAT IS A CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM?

A Head Start Child Development program provides preschool children with a place to play and learn. Whether a center or home-based program option is selected, the Head Start education component is organized around enjoyable and significant experiences for the children, first of all, and for the families, teachers, aides, specialists, and volunteers who care for them.

Head Start programs include family service and health care—by social and community workers and by nurses, dentists, and doctors.

Head Start, however, has repeatedly emphasized that parents are their children's first teachers. They continue to be their children's most important teachers throughout childhood. Parents play a very active role in developing the policies and suggesting the activities of the programs. They are continuously encouraged to visit—if the program is center-based—and to participate as fully as possible, each in his or her own way.

The program makes every effort to draw together all those people who are committed to the health, education, and well-being of the developing child.

This booklet describes the general philosophy as well as specific daily planning for center-based programs. For home-based programs—each of which will have its own unique design—the major emphasis must be to help parents enhance the total development of their children.

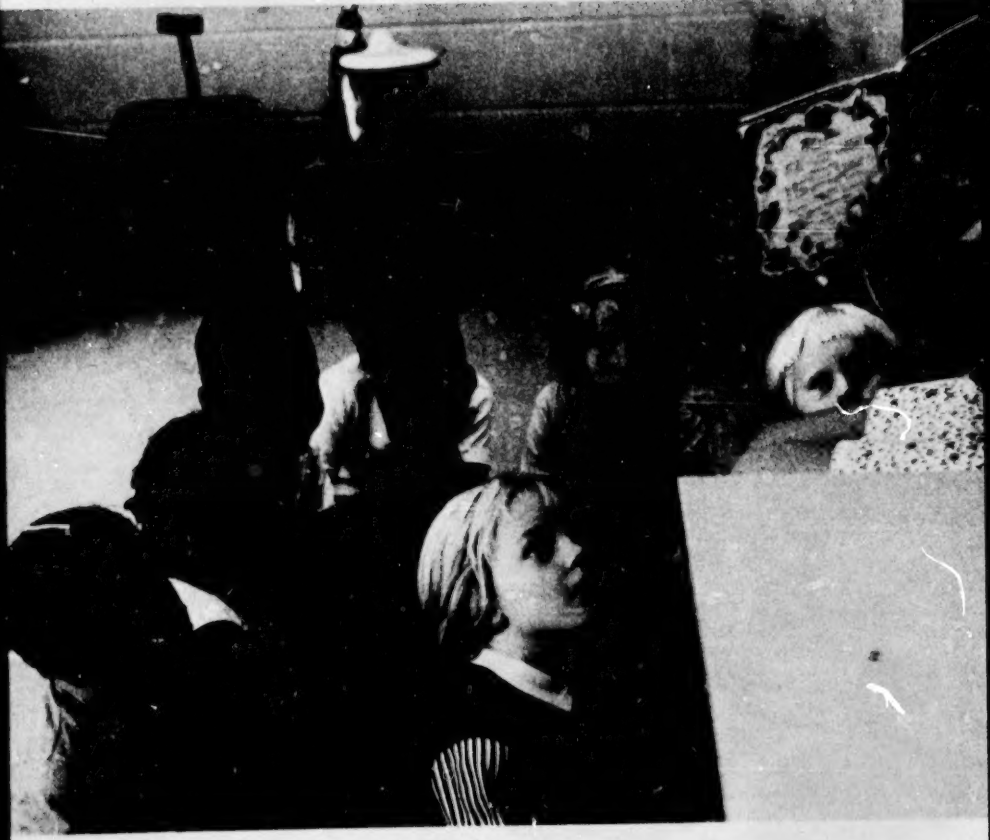
II. THE STAFF DESIGNS ITS OWN PROGRAM

Available to all Head Start Centers and staff are booklets (The Rainbow Series, sometimes referred to as the Program Series Booklets) describing various components of Head Start. They cover topics such as nutrition, staff development and training, medical services, volunteers, daily activities, speech, hearing and language development and psychological services.

This Booklet, Daily Program I, attempts to answer some questions about the educational component of child care—

about the children and our goals for them;
about curriculum and schedules; and
about teaching young children.

You will want to design the daily activities in ways that suit your children's neighborhood and community.



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The booklets Daily Program II and III present a detailed educational program and point of view. **This** booklet—Daily Program I—is a brief statement of teaching techniques and of philosophy.

To work well, a preschool program should fit the particular needs of the child and the families it serves, as well as be matched to the best capacities of its staff. Many worthy and stimulating programs, for example, will operate less than five days per week; in some the number of hours spent in the center will vary; whereas others will propose a program designed to meet specific local needs. Communities may elect to develop a home-based model or incorporate part of such a model into their current program. Each program should be individualized to suit the people involved.

Some programs, center-based, consist of one room and fifteen or sixteen children, with a teacher, an aide and a volunteer. Others are huge complexes, caring for several hundred children and having, therefore, many staff members. Home-based programs will operate with the home as the central facility using all available resources to provide comprehensive services for its children and their families.

Our basic educational component as we refer to it in this booklet is one room in any setting—and what actually goes on between one group of children and the adults.

Our suggestions for preschool programming as outlined in this booklet are directed to all teachers, parents, aides, and volunteers. All are called "teacher" here because they all make great educational impact on the children regardless of their formal titles or roles. In everything they do, they are looked to by the children for information, affection, and understanding.

III. THE CHILDREN THEMSELVES— WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?

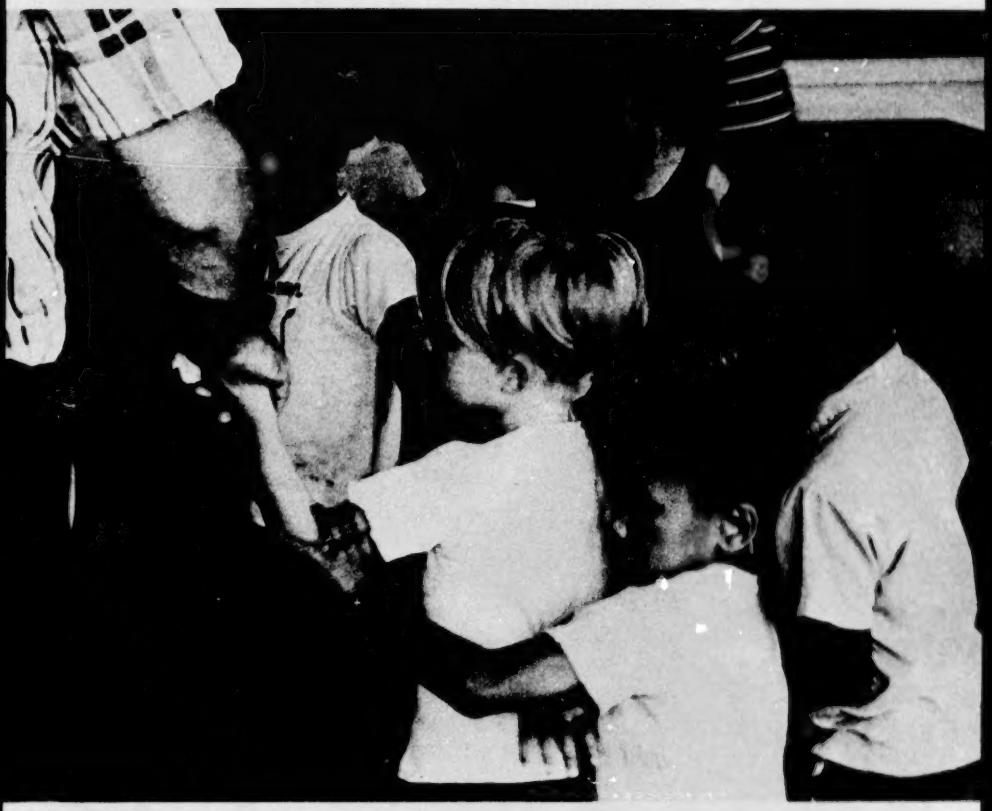
Before a child starts school, his ties with his family, and the objects in and around his home, make up his world. They mold much of his thinking up to that point.

The teacher and aide visit the child's home before he starts to attend the Head Start program to welcome him and his family, and to plan a secure entrance for him into the new world of the Center. They go not to pry, but

to make friends with the child and to offer information about the program to the mother who, put at ease, comes up with questions unhurriedly and unhesitatingly. This visit marks in a real sense, the beginning of the pre-school program.

People find that there are many kinds of youngsters coming into a new Head Start group, and they know better than to predict children's abilities in advance. **Each child is different. Each is unique.**

Each child coming into Head Start has strengths as well as special needs. Head Start's goal is that all the children gain from the widening world of the program. They will learn new words, new skills, and a heightened regard for themselves.



IV. GOALS FOR ALL CHILDREN

Because all children have basic needs, regardless of their backgrounds, a statement of goals for your Child Development Center might well read as follows:

To help children

learn to work and play independently, able to accept both help and direction from adults;

develop their use of language—listening and speaking, and grasping connections between spoken and written words;

exercise curiosity—asking questions, seeking answers, becoming problem-solvers;

play with, and come to comprehend, mathematical concepts like sequence, quantity, number, sorting;

widen their knowledge of the world—through science, books, field trips, films;

develop physical coordination and skill;

grow in ability to express inner creative impulses—dancing, painting, speaking, singing, making things;

grow in ability to control inner destructive impulses—to talk instead of hit, to understand the difference between feeling angry and acting out anger, to feel sympathy for others in trouble;

learn how to get along comfortably with other children—each to value his own rights and the rights of others;

view themselves as competent and valued persons.

V. ORGANIZATION OF SPACE: HOW DOES A HEAD START CENTER LOOK?

A look at room arrangements in kindergartens, day care centers, and nursery schools the world over shows an agreement about providing space–

for children's active work,

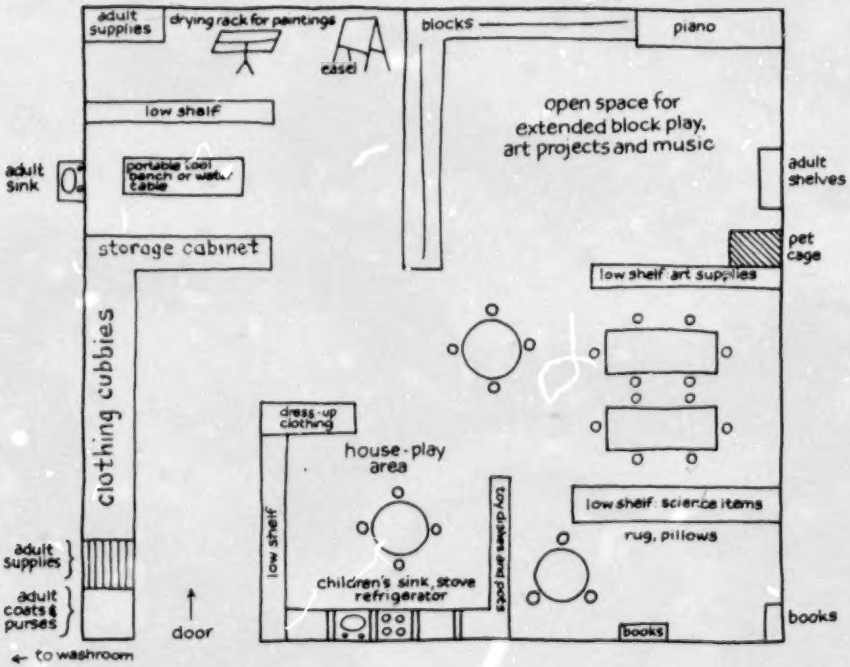
for quiet concentration,

for open areas given over to vigorous physical activity,

for flexible places where children can play alone or in small clusters.

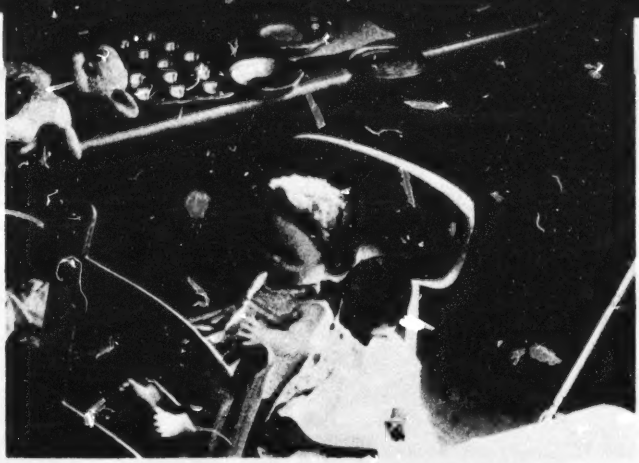
Of course, any room arrangement depends on how many children are grouped together, their ages and physical states, the make-up of the program, where outdoor play space is located, and the facilities of the building.

Look at a typical large room and consider how it divides itself into corners and open spaces for the comfort, exuberance, and ever-changing interests of both the children and grownups.



Block Building Area—large enough for several children at a time to build bridges, roads and tracks, farms, and sky-scrapers. It can be used at other times for music and dancing or for special projects; however, the area should be clearly established as the place to build with blocks. Things to use with blocks, such as small cars, airplanes, tractors, and miniature human and animal figures, belong here too.

Library Area—ideally a cozy, separate corner where children look at books and pictures, participate in discussion or word and number games, listen to tapes, view slides or films. A rug here can serve to unite a group of youngsters gathered on the floor to hear a story. Low book shelves contain children's books and magazines. Personal books on loan and library books may be stored here or on the grownups' shelves.



House-Play Area—should contain child-sized cupboard with dishes and pots, dolls and doll bed, sink and refrigerator, dress-up clothes, telephones. The "men" like to play here, too, and both boys and girls create complex social happenings using other less stereotyped equipment like old typewriters, improvised TV sets, hobby-shop gadgetry.

Extra floor covering of mats or linoleum or spread-out newspapers help with water play here, just as in the other parts of the room where the easel (or water play or finger-painting) might be set up.

Table-Work Area—providing tables and proper-sized chairs for all the children and adults. Adjacent low shelves hold art and manipulative supplies—clay, paper, crayons, scissors and paste, games, puzzles, felt and sandpaper letters; with variants to be added as the children need to freshen their interests or learn more complex skills.

Science shelves and tables are paired together, too, for childlike study of magnets, prisms, plants, seashells and stones, and all the natural material that energetic teachers provide.

Area for Painting–Woodworking–Water Play–flexible spaces for solid and movable equipment: easels, a woodworking bench, or a sand-and-water set-up (simple dishpans are fine for water play). Mops, sponges, and newspapers in plentiful supply are part of the scene. Large paper is stacked near the easel, along with a drying rack for paintings. Paints and brushes are stored in closed containers nearby. At the workbench, children use lumber scraps of soft wood, and real tools.

Children's Clothing Area–small open lockers ("cubbies") or crates supplied with a shelf and hooks make good storage for children's outdoor clothing. For lack of such units, many programs have used folding chairs, one for each child, lined up against the wall near the door. Others have simply placed low hooks along a wall, far enough apart from each other to make dressing comfortable without struggling for air and space. The chairs, cubbies, or hooks must be clearly marked with each child's name. Interchangeable sets of name cards can be used for doubleshift classes. Teachers can keep extra clothing for the children in baskets or boxes.

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Storage—needed for adult supplies. Securely-fastened closets or cabinets hold wraps, pocketbooks, sharp scissors, first-aid kits, extra books and puzzles for special occasions, phonograph records, tapes, and adult files and records. For that matter, many supplies must be out of reach and sight of small children: rainy-day projects, the year's supply of paper, office and cleaning provisions, and so forth.

It is important to bring portable equipment out of storage and add it to the playroom in bad weather. Even on good days, active indoor play is often scheduled as a worthwhile feature of the daily program. For example, a wooden rocking boat or ladderhouse, brought into the room from time to time, invites children's conversation, imaginative social games, and physical exercise.

There are other pieces of equipment—climbing frames, slides, and large wooden or cardboard boxes—which may be added to the playroom for large-muscle play when weather or high spirits indicate.

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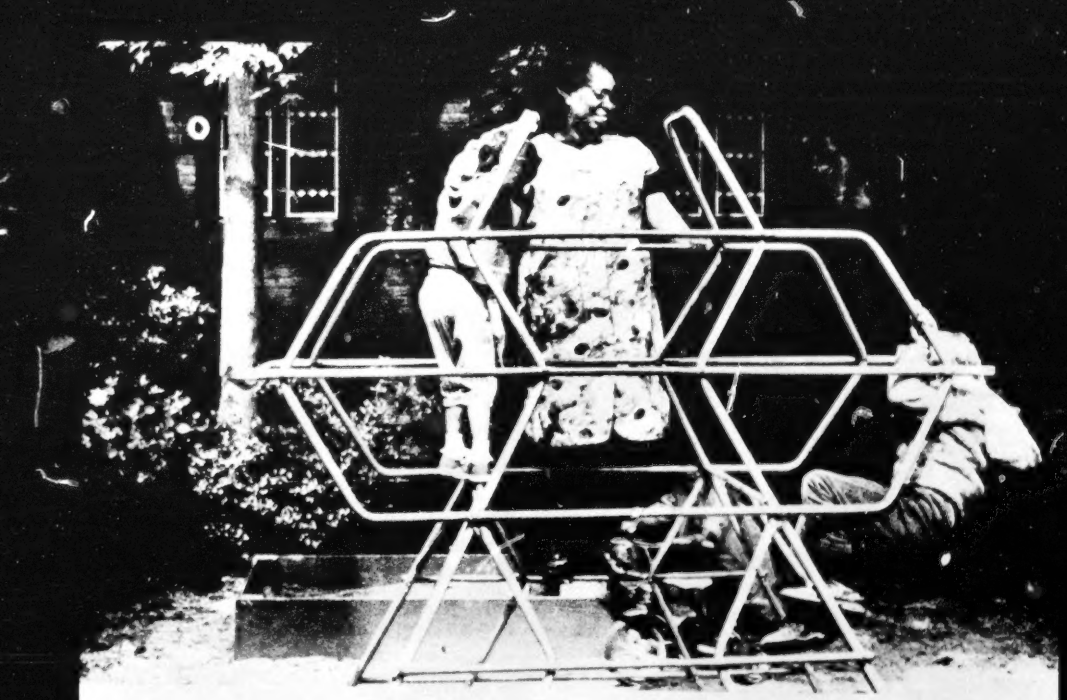

Outdoor Spaces local conditions determine our planning here. Some Centers and home-based programs have plenty of outdoor space available, with trees, hills, water, rocks, and dirt for digging. Others have only a concrete-covered yard with equipment stored overnight in outdoor sheds, which also serve as play-houses. If, on the other hand, all the equipment must be stored indoors every night, it has to be limited, portable, and rotated with fresh additions every so often, so that the youngsters don't become bored or careless.

In any case, children need outdoor time for building with barrels and planks, for running and riding tricycles and pulling wagon loads, for climbing and balancing, and for digging in sand and mud. There has to be thoughtful spacing. **Each type of play needs its own area outdoors as well as in.** In warm weather, plans for outdoor play must be diligently organized to provide good educational experiences in the outdoor world as well as in the playroom. In very hot climates, children should play outside in the cooler morning hours, then have their equipment moved indoors. In hot weather everywhere, a sprinkler or some other form of running water is of great benefit.

Ramps or wheeled chairs may be needed for physically handicapped children, who have great need of experiences both secure and stimulating in the outdoor world.

VI. CURRICULUM

Head Start does not mean doing sooner what children do in first and second grade. It means doing **now** the preschool work of differentiating and discriminating sounds, shapes, colors, textures, quantities, and meanings which are the prerequisites for the 3 R's . . . and much more besides.

You Teach Everything You Know.

Curriculum for 3-to-5-year-olds is harder to pin down in words than curriculum for elementary school children. As an actively participating grownup, you use every occasion to set problems for children and to help them integrate what they are learning. "Curriculum" means "course of study". For preschoolers, the course is a general one; it covers wide knowledge about themselves and the environment. The study does not take place at desks, but rather in the context both of children's self-initiated play and teacher-directed activity.

A child "studies" while exploring a room, getting help if he needs it, asking questions and putting the answers to use, hearing stories read aloud, discovering new words, engaging in conversation, conceiving new ideas, gathering new facts—all in a program tooled up with first-rate materials and taught by responsive adults. This holds true for handicapped children, too, who may,

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however, need extra help (from grownups or older children) as they explore and learn. Volunteers are a necessity.

Long before a child learns arithmetic, he must experience adding and subtracting with things like blocks and toy cars and crackers; if, as he goes through the motions, he hears words which match his actions from the adult, he can formulate appropriate concepts.

Long before a child reads, he has to learn that marks in books stand for specific words. He learns it from seeing his name written down and noting that different people can read it. He learns it from labels. He learns it by being close to a grownup who is reading to him or who writes down what he is saying and then will read it back and show him that this is how some books come to be written.

A skilled teacher recognizes and brings to life the concepts (like spatial relationships, for instance, or time) that are part-and-parcel of the playroom: in the dress-ups, the unit blocks, the puzzle pieces and peg sets, the songs, the washing-up routine, the cleaning of the hamster's cage. These concepts are **there**—in everyday objects—to be lifted out and used (along with educational supplies and equipment) for teaching and learning.

The teacher is the crux of the matter. A competent teacher, or mother at home, uses every opportunity to use the cognitive discoveries which are embedded in the total scene of preschool play.

> It's time to put away the blocks. Would you like to try this system?—put the square blocks like this on the bottom shelf. Then fit these round columns up here.
>
> Mike and Pedro have brown eyes, don't they? They are the same. Amy's eyes are green; that's a different color. Rosita's eyes are gray.

Good teachers focus on the children for cues, in planning what and how to teach.

A curriculum based on the play and work of childhood does **not** mean, then, opting only for social experiences (a common misconception). It does **not** mean "just" play—in which anything goes. It **does** mean deeply-involving play in which the children's intellectual growth is the goal in what the grownups plan and do: their preparations before the program begins, their alertness to the youngsters, their selection of materials, their participation—leading the children from simple to complex concepts as they play with increasingly varied materials.

A good curriculum for the child makes it possible for him to feel positive about himself and to enjoy learning. You—the grownup—make full use, along with the children, of the ideas and facts and problems of every moment.

You teach everything you know and are, and everything children want to know about and are becoming, and you teach it in young children's terms. You teach, among other things:

science	literature
mathematics	linguistics
sociology	geography
physics	ethics
meteorology	nutrition
art	self-discipline

although you probably never use these terms.

It Can All Happen Over Lunch

You can survey the preschool curriculum, in all its

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incredible variety, at almost any time of the day, even at lunch time:

- as the work tables are cleared and set up for the meal;
- as the children leave other activities, wash up, and gather together;
- as they serve and pass their plates, recognize favorite foods or encounter new ones;
- as they discuss the morning's projects or describe neighborhood adventures or make jokes or listen to adult explanations;

lunch becomes a forum.

The "curriculum" of the lunch might include identifying shapes, colors, smells, and names of things—counting, measuring, dividing, and ordering objects—increasing vocabulary, putting ideas into words, expressing how you feel, listening and responding to others—finding out about things that are going on in the world: information about everything under the sun.

It all depends on the adult. It depends on whether she has a lunch time where children and grownups really talk. Only if she elicits exchange, plucks out what is significant, and highlights the concepts, will an ordinary lunch become extraordinary.

It should be a lively program at every point of the day.

You Start From Where They Are

You teach on the level of the young child as you observe him—always starting with **his** play, **his** questions, **his** thoughts, **his** feelings. You teach the children in the straightforward and humorous language of the 3-to-4-year-old, and in the orderly and grownup words of the 5-year-old. To teach in the overly-sweet or silly fashion that some adults use with small children, or to hammer away at concepts they cannot grasp, is to miss the mark.

Look hard at young children around you. See for yourself what 3-to-5-year-old children are actually like, what they like to do, how they feel about themselves and about materials and interests, and then "start from where they are".

Don't waste time trying to make a 4-year-old behave like a kindergarten child, or expect development to move forward in even steps. Although most children will be between 4 and 6, chronological age is not the only basis for planning. An intelligent, well-coordinated boy may use the vocabulary typical of a 3-year-old or act out his feelings at times like a two-year-old. A blind child may move cautiously but absorb knowledge like a sponge. In the Child Development program, you will start from where each child is—at his many levels. You will help him realize his own abilities.

Does a Child Learn When He Is Playing?

A father visited his son's preschool Center one morning. Although he saw his little boy having a lot of fun, he was not sure—because he had not seen coloring books or ABC's or group recitations—just what his son was learning.

Here are a few things his little boy, Charles, did during the morning: he undertook and completed a 16-piece puzzle, built a sturdy and well-balanced block building with three friends, poured water thoughtfully in and out of a new measuring cup at the play sink and

conversed with the volunteer about the numbers on the side of the cup, played firehouse on the indoor jungle gym with a group of other youngsters, crayoned designs on paper, struggled to write down the letters in his name on the paper, returned to the block corner to assist with clean-up, joined the children listening to a story, and ate a hot lunch.

In spite of the fact that small children astound us with the achievements that they pack into their first 5 or 6 years, we often hear the questions: "What good is just playing?" or "Don't they need to 'learn' something?"

But isn't that just what they have been doing all along! We dare not neglect the essential steps all children must take—developing a rich spoken language, for example—before we present them with formal subject matter in the classroom. Good play materials and responsive adults, when brought together with a child's natural drive to learn, have always been our most powerful early educators.

Children Learn More Than We Bargain For

We have all experienced that tragicomic difference between what the teacher thinks she is getting across, and what actually comes through to the children. For instance, a teacher and aide take their group of 5- and 6-year-olds to the park to observe how squirrels hide nuts for winter feeding. This fits into a conceptual scheme of animals' preparations for winter. But the children—because they are 5, or 6, are fascinated

by the passing cars,
by a couple of toddlers who approach them,
by the man who goes about with a tool, picking up litter,
by the dog who dramatically chases a cat up a tree,
by a man asleep on a park bench,
by a policeman who appears in uniform and stops to chat,
and, of course, by the squirrels and nuts.

The experienced teacher seizes upon these fascinations and uses them on the spot and back in the classroom. The children play out their walk to the park. The

teacher watches, picks up on it—through the use of conversation, books, dramatic play, film strips, block building. She turns a simple walk into a fascinating journey to be remembered and thought about long afterwards.

Toys and Materials are the Textbooks of Preschool Curriculum

Because play materials and toys are used so hard, they must be carefully chosen. This is no place for flimsy or broken toys. Splintered blocks or scratched phonograph records or torn books or watery paints or incomplete puzzles don't belong in a learning environment. To use them is to settle for second-rate education.

Blocks that work best are made of wood in mathematically related shapes and sizes.

Paints satisfy children deeply and permit real exploration of color and design when the colors are bright, paper and brushes are large, and when clothing is safely covered.

Dolls represent different people and are to be kept clean and whole. Dolls need simple doll clothes that can be taken off and put on.

Climbing and balancing equipment: no splinters or exposed nails. Climbing frames must be steady and neither too babyish nor too high.

Sand: not expensive washed sand but rather an ordinary building or beach sand—loaded into large indoor containers or outdoor piles, with lots of durable buckets, pots, scoops.

At the **workbench,** teachers furnish solid hammers and real saws and good sharp nails. Toy tools don't work; with regular tools and soft wood scraps—and careful supervision—children are safe and they can create great abstract objects (or real objects if they prefer).

Children's books must be selected from store or library by people who know 3- to 6-year-olds and who are unwilling to settle for inappropriate or damaged books.

For **indoor block building and dramatic play,** accessories like dolls, small trucks, telephones, and miniature figures are very stimulating to young imaginations.

In general, materials should be versatile rather than narrow and specific. For example, a plain peg set holds

interest longer than a fancy set full of special details. Pieces of rope or hose lead to richer play than a mechanical wind-up toy. Hollow blocks and boards can become a fire engine, but they also can be

a hospital
a dump truck
an airplane
a boat
a cave
a store
a tractor

and so on and on. Children show remarkable inventiveness in their use of materials.

They develop skills with these materials in gradual, step-by-step progressions. They touch, look, and listen. They study, handle. They take apart, put together, and discuss. They extract the properties and meanings and qualities of toys and materials and use them as versatile vehicles of learning.

VII. SCHEDULING IS KNOWING WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The daily schedule structures the day and the learning for children and adults alike. The children learn what their program is all about as they go through, day after day, a schedule that is well thought-out, flexibly applied, and pursued with comforting regularity.

The way time is spent is a pattern just as the way the room is laid out. The child's knowing what is going to happen next is as important as his knowing his teacher and as his knowing where he can find things in the room.

The clarity of the schedule—experienced by the children **from the first day on**—will affect the way they can take advantage of what is offered in the program. If from the beginning the grown-ups go over sequences of the day with the children (not severely but gently) then the children make it their own.

After you put on your jacket, you'll be going out to play. Then we will all come in for lunch.

Remember what we did yesterday? We had music right after story-time. We'll do that every day.

If you need to change the schedule, tell the children what you are doing. Go over the new sequence with them, so that they become as secure with it as they were with the old one.

Before getting into the detailed sample schedules listed below, think first of the basic rhythms of preschool life—rhythms based on well-balanced and naturally-paced action.

Many programs begin with breakfast. Then there will be a period of activity followed by a middle period of relative quiet. During the first, active period:

children can choose what they will do and with whom they will play in a free, self-directed pattern; and

free time is balanced by directed activities such as finger-painting or a science project or care of a pet or a Lotto game.

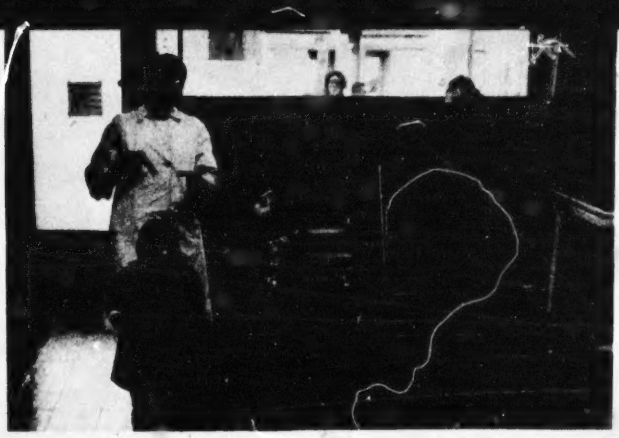
Then, during the middle period, the children take on a group look. They may snack on juice or milk, with crackers; listen to a story, and sing together.

The last period of a half-day session is spent outdoors when possible. It is feasible to reverse this order, so that the youngsters can go outside at the beginning of the session and then spend their last hour or so indoors. Where a well-equipped playground is not available, the grownups can still use the out-of-doors for walks, games, visits, and trips.

Teachers and parents of young children always stress their strong conviction that schedules must be flexible, not rigidly timed by a clock. If the children are deep in compelling play or a project not yet completed, a flexible adult permits them to work a little longer; she can read a shorter than-usual story that day or limit music to just 1 or 2 songs. With that in mind, we examine now one possible schedule for a **3-to-4-hour session.**

THE 3-4 HOUR SCHEDULE

Breakfast	20 mins.
Work-Play Period (activities both planned and spontaneous)	60-75 mins.
Focused Group Activities (examples: washing up, music, snack, story)	30-45 mins.
Outdoor Play (in bad weather; gym, circle games, dancing)	30-60 mins.
Wash-up and Lunch	30 mins.
Preparation for end of program	10-15 mins.



A word about the 10-15 minute "preparation for end of program: this is the time for last-minute toileting and washing if necessary. For Center-based programs pictures and books to carry home, notes to parents, etc., must be at hand just as the final getting into wraps goes on. It should be very thoughtfully planned, so that the end of each day does not become frantic. For those children who are ready first and bursting with energy, provision should be made for orderly play (gym equipment often works well here) so that these youngsters don't dash around losing their belongings, bothering children not yet dressed—and having to be scolded by harassed grownups.

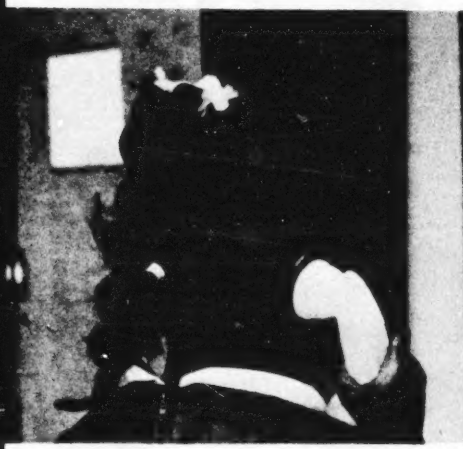
The All-Day Schedule

For those Centers operating full-day programs, the half-day schedule serves as a 3-4-hour core—with early morning and later afternoon additions which provide children with a home-like and intriguing flow of things to do. One sample of sequences might be as follows: (there are many variations)

Breakfast, quiet play, listening to records, helping to get the Center in operation	7:00 - 9:00 a.m.
Core of half-day work and play schedule	9:00 a.m. - Noon
Luncheon	Noon - 12:50 p.m.
Nap, rest, or quiet time	1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Outdoor play, and special projects with special people (examples: dancing, music, gymnastics, care of pets, trips, cooking, creative dramatics, photography)	
Preparation for end of program	10-15 minutes at whatever the hour

The end of each day must be particularly carefully planned, in programs lasting six-to-eight hours, so that the later hours are as enjoyable and challenging as earlier hours. Special people sometimes can be added to a late afternoon period to enliven the program: they are parents, grandparents, high school students, community workers, a librarian, anyone who will contribute his time and himself to the children in appropriate and understanding ways.

Schedules such as these can be applied to any sort of time arrangement needed. The program may operate four days a week for center based activities plus an additional day for center staff to perform special activities such as, special services for children, home visits, in-service training for staff, parents and volunteers. It may sometimes operate double-session classes. It may operate for only three or four hours every day; it may be a full-day program. It can be a good program, no matter what its schedule, if it offers children things to do that fit their ages and stages and interests.



VIII. THE TEACHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP IS THE CORE

After all that has been said about room arrangement, curriculum, and schedules, the heart of the program lies in the relationship between teacher and child. (To repeat: by "teacher" we mean every adult who comes into sustained contact with the children in the Center—aides, teachers, parents and volunteers.) The relationship

is built up through time spent together in shared experiences and feelings. It deepens as the adult and child get to know each other more and more. It sustains during pain and failure. It nourishes mastery, understanding, and pleasure.

The relationship pervades the entire program, but perhaps it is revealed most tellingly in such basic aspects of teaching as language, discipline, and self-concept.

Language. A child learns to talk effectively by being listened to—and responded to—by a person he cares about. Out of a secure relationship with the teacher comes a child's first verbal exchange with an adult in school: one-to-one conversation. The adult devotes her attention to the child, catching—as she is able—several opportunities each day. She invites him to talk, concentrates on any attempt at speech, picks up what the child says, responds to it, tries hard to understand, shows in every way how important the child's words and meaning are to her.

A good teacher or mother thinks **with** a child. She watches and wonders—wonders what it is that he is thinking, deciding, discovering. She asks questions subtly by musing aloud: "How do those blocks stay that way?" "I wonder how the turtle got his shell." "When do you suppose these seeds will grow into flowers?" "Let's see how long it takes for the light bulb to get hot."

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A note of caution: it is crucial to avoid saving or doing anything which inhibits children from talking. A grownup can cause a child to clam up by telling him she cannot hear, he will have to speak more loudly; or by telling him to pronounce his words more carefully; or by referring to his accent; or by laughing at something he meant not to be funny; or by being too busy to listen to him, so that his message goes unheard. A teacher can "listen" to several children at once—nodding her head at one, putting her hand on the shoulder of another—and taking in as much as she can, communicating her interest to these several youngsters at the same time. Later on, after speech flows, she can make the point that she can hear only one at a time.

Children's eagerness to use and enjoy language expands when they feel secure and sure of the teachers' regard for them.

Discipline. Control that leads to self-control can happen only if there is a small number of children for each adult, and if the total number in each group is kept small. Weak and ineffective or repressive teaching multiplies if the group is too large or the number of adults too small.

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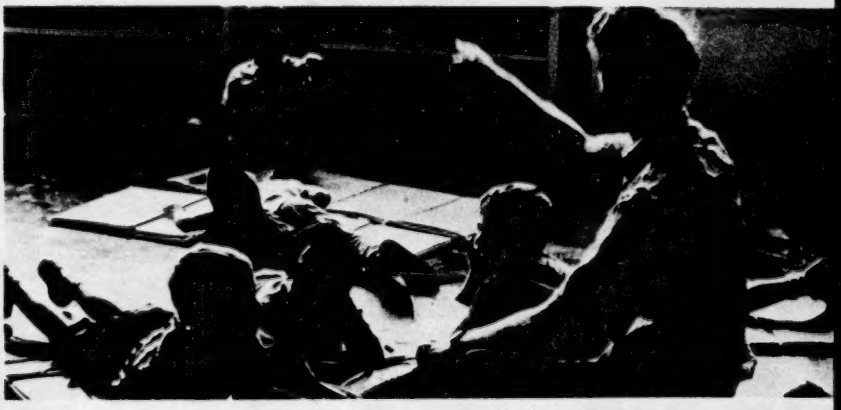
Reports from Center-based programs suggest strongly that a gradual start (a few children at a time) is the best way to root the new teacher-child relationship and to establish the teacher as the authority-figure. One way this has been accomplished is: 5 or 6 different children begin coming to the Center each day; then, on the 4th day, everyone comes. One experienced staff member said that she felt she was not "getting through" to the 15 new 4-year-olds who showed up in the Center on the first day. The following year she tried, with success, the gradual admission just described.

Staff members have found that explicit directions and rules must be firmly, simply stated and followed from the very beginning. They rely on loving-care combined with clear-cut setting of limits. Love is essential, but it is not enough. The curbing and channeling of aggression is essential, but it is not enough. Only the two together will do, and they are really two sides of the same coin. The adults, in effect, care enough for the child not to let him damage himself or others through hurting or unacceptable behavior. But there is basic respect for each child as an individual, even when he is not behaving well.

"Screaming is too loud for school."
"Ask Malcolm for the truck, Ted; don't grab it from him."
"Malcolm is not ready to give you a turn, yet, Ted. He'll be finished in a few minutes."
"I know you feel like crying, Annette, but you can tell Betty you don't want to be the baby. Maybe you could be the big sister."
"Keep the water in the basin; if it spills, mop it up right away so no one will slip."
"Blocks are for building, not throwing, Leon. Here's a place for your blocks, right over here."
"It's OK to feel mad at me for stopping you, Didi. But I won't let you kick me. You can tell me you're angry."



Words are often insufficient in these situations. The adult uses them along with the most telling language of all—"body language". With a hug, a fencing in with the arms, a standing nearby, a lifting onto her lap, a taking of the hands, she "speaks" directly to the child. (The following examples are a continuation of the situations above.)

The screamer may be taken quickly out of the room for a few minutes (accompanied, of course, by his teacher) before the class falls apart.

Ted is helped to return the grabbed truck to Malcolm, the teacher staying close by while Ted asks for the truck. When Ted's request is refused, the teacher may lead him to another activity before

she leaves his side. Then she makes sure to follow up, a little later, with the truck Ted waited for.

Annette might be comforted with a hand around her shoulders and helped to don a big-sister skirt and purse.

The mop is put into the hands of the child who spilled water.

Leon is encircled by his teacher's arms and if it looks as if he cannot stop throwing the blocks, he is taken to another part of the room. Later in the morning, the teacher sees that Leon has a turn in the bean-bag throwing game.

Most children are at home with body language and use it more freely than words. Of course, one of the main changes we expect and work towards is the shift to more and more verbal language. And as the weeks go by, the children will start to follow and enforce the rules, having taken them over for themselves from their teachers. Then the self-control that leads to learning comes about.

Self-Concept. A young child becomes himself as he discovers and shapes his identity through ways he sees himself reflected back

Mirrors are useful in school. They reflect for the children their own physical likenesses. Snapshots of a child and his block building—or other things he has made—can mean a lot to him and to his family.

The most telling reflections, though, come from the "eyes" of the teacher . . . from a look, a touch, or a word. As a trusted adult sees and mirrors back to him, so a child defines and redefines his feelings about himself with new strengths and dimensions coming into focus.

The teacher sings a song to each of the children sitting around the snack table.

"Mary Beane wears some green;"
"Samuel's shoe has a spot of blue;"
"The pants of Fred are red;"
"And Jenny's gown is brown."

What will the children get out of it? The catchy tune? Some will pick it up quickly. Colors? Perhaps. Rhyming? Not likely for awhile. What matters is that Mary Beane, who speaks hardly a word in school, has a prominent place in her teacher's song. Maybe Samuel has to hunt

carefully for that tiny spot of paint on his shoe, which he then proudly shows to the others. Perhaps, if she caught the words, Jenny looked down at her dress which now has been transformed by her teacher into a brown gown.

Above all, each child has been singled out in the group by the teacher, has been named and pictured to himself and to the others.

This would be only one simple way—a beginning. Mary Beane, for instance, will become the girl who not only wore green, but who came to school with many-colored ribbons in her hair, who was the "good baby" in

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Shirley's pretend family, who picked up the song so very quickly and sang it softly for all the class, who could do one of the hardest puzzles, and who stuck her fingers into the clay one memorable day and, with only the slightest suggestion from the teacher, proceeded to make the imprint of her hand and then everybody else wanted to do it too, and they all let the clay hands dry and painted them and took them home.

The teacher primarily works a mirroring transformation through success experiences. She gives praise and admiration freely and honestly for the smallest to the greatest achievement:

"That was a high jump, Stanley!"

"Maria knows everyone's names."

"Peter has built a tower of blocks that is taller than he is. We're going to leave it up so his mother can see it. Be careful of it, everybody."

"You painted your design in different shades of green . . . it's nice, Lila. I'll put your name on it."

"That was a hard puzzle, and you finished it. I'm proud of you."

So it happens that a child can say, as a child indeed did say to his teacher, "I did a good job, and I like

IX. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

Records Help You Know the Children

One way to evaluate procedures is for the staff to keep anecdotal records about the children—writing down short descriptions of important or characteristic incidents. Adults in charge need to recall what children do and say from day to day because it is impossible to remember. Daily recording in the diary on individual children and on the classroom or home-based program as a whole will be invaluable. Going over these records later gives many insights to staff members. It builds teaching skills and enables the student to follow the exciting and often surprising development of the children over the year. Careful records are especially important for the handicapped child who is enrolled in a center-based or home-based program. Such records will be added to the information used by health specialists working with a handicapped child and his family.

Staff Meetings Can Solve Problems

The heart of the educational process in Center-based programs is the teacher-and-aide team. It is on their sensitivity, knowledge, skill and strength that the program depends. Adults working with children in home-based programs need the same inner resources. They need to be backed up by a prompt and effective administration and by the community.

In a Center, all staff members benefit from participation in staff meetings, discussing teaching techniques and the inevitable problems with each other, planning joint activities and trips, exchanging visits to each other's rooms, etc. All people who work with preschool children especially need this sort of ongoing communication because so much of the content of their curriculum is affected by the complex and spontaneous behavior of young children in their groups.

No child caretaker should have to function alone. Each needs the support and insight of the entire team.

X. VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers contribute in a variety of ways, according to their personalities and backgrounds, and according to specific ways teachers and children need assistance.

Some volunteers are able to tune in to a shy child

and help him feel confident enough to speak up and move about freely. Other volunteers comprehend aggressive children and are able to help them control their behavior—not harshly but with firmness and affection and by showing constant interest in the child.

Other volunteers may not take active teaching roles, but they may go about collecting "treasure" for the Center. They can find crates, bits of fur or silk for doll clothes, dress-ups in good condition, soft wood scraps for the work bench, and mirrors for house-play.

Still others may offer their skills in sewing curtains

and children's aprons for painting, making flannel boards, showing slides to the children, taking them for walks, or bringing magazine pictures in to mount on the walls or bulletin boards. Some offer badly needed clerical help.

Whatever they bring to the programs and however they are scheduled, they must be willing to accept direction from the teacher just as other assistants do. They are often included in staff meetings, so that they can follow the planning for the children with whom they work.

Many special projects can be scheduled only if extra help is available. Because activities like trips or cooking may be undertaken with a particular volunteer's assistance as part of the plan, a substitute must be found if the volunteer cannot meet his or her appointment. Some of the most interesting and interested volunteers are men. Men or women—they are central to the programs.

XI. EDUCATIONAL ALLIES: PARENT, CHILD, AND TEACHER

Parents are needed in a Center-based program at every possible level—to plan and to participate. Only when an alliance is established between home and school—between parent, child, and teacher—can education succeed. Teachers can establish the alliance in little ways—sending toys and books home on loan, for example, and in big ways—giving energy and time, more than seems possible, to relating to the families of the children.

XII. A GOOD START

When a child's world has expanded to include a new place—his Center—where he has found an adult outside his family circle whom he can trust, where he has mastered new skills, explored materials, increased his use of language, strengthened his self-confidence, sampled creative play with his friends—this child has surely taken some giant steps.

The challenge is enormous. Let us aim for the most competent staff, in well-organized and equipped space, with caring-control of children, a flexible schedule, a firm policy to stop, look and listen to the children, and with the help of their indomitable spirit and resilience, a Head Start can be a **good** start.

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